

165. *Spizella pusilla*.—Field Sparrow.

Common over the whole region where there are suitable brushy conditions. It breeds on the sand spit, but less commonly than one might expect. Its proper habitat is brushy borders of woods, or, if there is no brush, rank weeds will do as well. Brushy fields are also thickly inhabited. Most nests are placed above the ground, sometimes as high as six feet in a brushy tangle, but sometimes practically on the ground among weed stems and grasses. The median date of arrival is March 18, the earliest March 12, 1898. The median date of departure of the bulk is September 19, the latest being October 23. This Sparrow is seldom imposed upon by the Cowbird, in spite of the relatively exposed situation of the nest—or because of this.

166. *Junco hyemalis*.—Slate-colored Junco.

Abundant during the migrations, and usually common all winter, especially in the stream gorges. It ranges with the Tree Sparrow in the less exposed places of that sparrow's range, but does not often venture out of the woods or brush, except to door yards, in mid-winter. It is a frequent visitor to the lunch counter in winter. The median date of departure of the bulk is April 25, and of the last, April 30, but individuals sometimes tarry to May 20 (1907). The birds return about the first of October, and become common almost immediately. Early fall storms which cover their food often bring about a diminution in numbers. I have found them tucked snugly away in hay stacks, in hay mows, in corn shocks, among the rocks in the gorges, in thickly leaved trees, beneath thick grass, and beneath the snow, where they pass the night.

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SOME WINTER BIRDS ABOUT LAKE WIMLICO,  
FLORIDA.

BY G. CLYDE FISHER.

Having decided to spend a week hunting deer in the vicinity of Lake Wimlico, six others and I proceeded to Apalachicola, an interesting old city situated on the Gulf coast at the mouth of the river of the same name. Here we secured a launch, and on the morning of December 25, 1909, we started, going up the Apalachicola River, which separates what is locally known as West Florida from the rest of the state. This pan-handle, which lies immediately south of Alabama, would naturally be a geographical part of that state. However, it is

a part of Florida. We proceeded northward up the Apalachicola River, a distance of about six miles, to the mouth of Jackson's Old River, into which we turned. The river, as may be supposed, takes its name from General Jackson, and many local traditions are handed down of how he here bearded the Spaniards in their den. Although it is only eight miles long, the river is from one-fourth to one-half mile wide. It simply forms the outlet of Lake Wimlico, connecting it with the Apalachicola River. After proceeding through Jackson's Old River we entered Lake Wimlico, which is one of the most beautiful of the numerous lakes of Florida, many of which are remarkable for their rare beauty.

This lake is located in the southern part of Calhoun County, in a region which is generally known as the St. Jo Country. Owing to the lowness of the land and the consequent wet conditions for a large part of each year, this region is very sparsely settled and has been disturbed by man to a very limited extent. In fact, almost everything exists in its primeval beauty. As will be noted from this brief narrative, the lake lies northwest of Apalachicola, and is less than fifteen miles distant. It is rather long and narrow, being about twelve miles long and from two to six miles wide. It is surrounded by almost interminable cypress swamps, with here and there a small area of "piney" woods, which areas are all well back from the lake.

Besides the Cypress with its graceful festoons of Spanish "Moss," the prevailing trees are Black Gum, Cabbage, Spruce Pine, and Slash Pine. The magnificent Cabbage, Spruce interspersed here and there, some of which are forty feet in height, give the region a tropical appearance. The berries of the Black Gum constitute a very important part of the food of the Florida Black Bear, which is still found in considerable numbers in these almost limitless swamps.

Flowing into the lake are several creeks, or bayous. We proceeded to the mouth of one called Indian Bayou, near the upper end of the lake. While going through the lake it was not difficult to imagine what a birds' paradise this place must be during the nesting season, especially for water-loving and

swamp-loving birds. From the launch, on the way through the lake, I counted fifty-six Osprey's nests in the cypress trees surrounding the lake, but I did not see a single Osprey. Our guide told us that they were down on the Gulf at this time of year. He further informed us that, although the Ospreys build their nests and rear their young around the lake, they go to the Gulf, which is fifteen or twenty miles distant, to fish, and that they bring food for their young from that distance. He thinks they nest up around the lake to avoid the Bald Eagles which stay around the Gulf.

We went up Indian Bayou about five miles, where we found a landing — an open space with a few scattering pines, which was slightly higher than the surrounding country, but only very slightly higher. The lowness and levelness of this whole region may be better realized when we consider the fact that the tides were not only considerable on the lake, having come up the river from Apalachicola Bay, but that at our camp, five miles up Indian Bayou, we had a tide of two or three feet.

We remained in camp here six days, and since hunting deer was the primary object of the trip, bird-study was only incidental. If one does not mind wading in water, this is a great place to hunt. Wild Cats, Otters, Deer, and Black Bears are rather plentiful, and there are still a few Panthers. Wild Turkeys are by no means rare, but we saw none on this trip.

We saw Florida Blue Jays about Apalachicola, but I was surprised to find them absent around Lake Wimlico. Not one was seen during the six days, but their absence is probably explained by the absence of oak trees and the consequent absence of acorns.

Pied-billed Grebes were much rarer than I expected to find them, since they are so common in West Florida during the winter months.

The rarest privilege of the trip from the standpoint of a bird student was our experience with the Sandhill Cranes. Every morning at daybreak we could hear their "sonorous croakings."

A few species of birds were observed about Apalachicola, which we did not see up about Lake Wimlico, such as Wilson's Snipe, Brown Pelican, Ground Dove, Pipit, Fish Crow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Boat-tailed Grackle, but they are not included in the list, which is undoubtedly far from complete, as it contains only those birds that we were fortunate enough to observe from December 25 to 31, 1909.



Osprey's (*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*) Nest on Indian Bayou, near Lake Wimlico, Florida. (Photo by G. Clyde Fisher, Dec. 26, 1909.)

- (1) *Colymbus auritus*.—Horned Grebe. One seen.
- (2) *Podilymbus podiceps*.—Pied-billed Grebe. Two seen on Indian Bayou.
- (3) *Larus argentatus*.—Herring Gull. Several seen on the way up the river.
- (4) *Aix sponsa*.—Wood Duck. Not rare.

(5) *Aythia affinis*.—Lesser Scaup Duck. A few flocks on the lake. Other ducks were seen, but no others were positively identified.

(6) *Ardea herodias*.—Great Blue Heron. A few seen.

(7) *Grus americana*.—Sandhill Crane. Common. Heard every morning at daybreak and often during the day. From two to six often seen flying about. An adult female taken on December 27, since mounted, and now in the Palmer College collection. The trachea of this specimen was dissected out, and found to contain a peculiar and elaborate curve mostly encased in the breast-bone.

(8) *Fulica americana*.—Coot. Two seen.

(9) *Ægialitis vocifera*.—Killdeer. Common.

(10) *Zenaidura macroura*.—Mourning Dove. Not rare.

(11) *Cathartes aura septentrionalis*.—Turkey Vulture. Common.

(12) *Catharista atrata*.—Black Vulture. A few seen.

(13) *Circus hudsonius*.—Marsh Hawk. Rather common.

(14) *Buteo lineatus*.—Red-shouldered Hawk. Common.

(15) *Falco sparverius*.—Sparrow Hawk. A few seen.

(16) *Stryx varia alleni*.—Florida Barred Owl. Frequently heard in the swamps at night.

(17) *Ceryle alcyon*.—Belted Kingfisher. Several seen.

(18) *Dryobates pubescens*.—Southern Downy Woodpecker. A few seen.

(19) *Dryobates borealis*.—Red-cockaded Woodpecker. A few seen in the patches of pine woods.

(20) *Sphyrapicus varius*.—Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Rather common.

(21) *Phloxotomus pileatus*.—Pileated Woodpecker. Rather common.

(22) *Centurus carolinus*.—Red-bellied Woodpecker. Very common.

(23) *Colaptes auratus*.—Flicker. A few seen.

(24) *Sayornis phæbe*.—Phæbe. Common.

(25) *Corvus brachyrhynchos pascuus*.—Florida Crow. Common. A specimen taken and sent to Frank M. Chapman,

who pronounced it *pascuus* with the comment "approaching *brachyrhynchos*."

(26) *Sturnella magna*.—Meadowlark. Common. May have been the Florida Meadowlark, *S. m. argutula*.

(27) *Astragalinus tristis*.—Goldfinch. Not rare.

(28) *Coturniculus savannarum australis*.—Grasshopper Sparrow. Common. May have been the Florida sub-species, *C. s. floridanus*.

(29) *Ammodramus henslowi*.—Henslow Sparrow. Common.

(30) *Melospiza cinerea melodia*.—Song Sparrow. Two seen.

(31) *Papilo erythrophthalmus*.—Towhee. Several heard. May have been the White-eyed Towhee, *P. c. alleni*.

(32) *Cardinalis cardinalis*.—Cardinal. Several seen. May have been the Florida Cardinal, *C. c. floridanus*.

(33) *Iridoprocne bicolor*.—Tree Swallow. One seen.

(34) *Mniotilta varia*.—Black and White Warbler. Several seen.

(35) *Dendroica coronata*.—Myrtle Warbler. Not rare.

(36) *Dendroica vigorsii*.—Pine Warbler. Common.

(37) *Dendroica palmarum*.—Palm Warbler. Common.

(38) *Dendroica palmarum hypochrysa*.—Yellow Palm Warbler. Several seen.

(39) *Geothlypis trichas*.—Yellow-throat. A few seen. The sub-species not determined.

(40) *Mimus polyglottos*.—Mockingbird. Several seen.

(41) *Dumetella carolinensis*.—Catbird. Common.

(42) *Toxostoma rufum*.—Brown Thrasher. A few seen.

(43) *Thryothorus ludovicianus*.—Carolina Wren. Common.

(44) *Sitta pusilla*.—Brown-headed Nuthatch. A few seen.

(45) *Penthestes carolinensis*.—Carolina Chickadee. Common.

(46) *Regulus calendula*.—Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Very common.

- (47) *Hylocichla guttata pallasii*.—Hermit Thrush. Rather common.
- (48) *Planesticus migratorius*.—Robin. Very common.
- (49) *Sialia sialis*.—Bluebird. Common.

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THE STATUS OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON (*Ectopistes migratorius*) IN EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

"In view of the fact that every good bird student will be looking out for Passenger Pigeons this summer, I write to give you a little information which, however, may not be much good, but nevertheless will interest you. At Mt. Gettysburg, Lebanon County, Pa., where our military company often goes on their summer camp, Mr. Vernon Wallace, of this town, saw a pair of Passenger Pigeons in the trees about the camp, between May 1 and 15 (favorable dates). Birds were rather tame at first, but soon became wild, and, after three days, did not return from the wooded mountain side (nearby), to where they invariably flew when disturbed. Mr. Wallace is an experienced hunter and could not be mistaken. I submit this bit of information because the location is not far from your home. News twelve years old may be stale, but nevertheless it may be a case of 'staler the better.'" So writes Mr. J. Warren Jacobs in a recent note, and recalls to my mind an instance of a single egg taken from a frail nest in a cedar tree, near Columbia, Lancaster County, in 1889, by Mr. Lionel F. Bowers—my companion in many a boyish collecting trip. I examined the egg, listened to his description of the bird, and had no doubt of its identity.

On the other hand, Mr. E. W. Campbell's recent record in Luzerne County, of a "resident pair, reared young" (*Oologist*, Vol. xxiii, 1906, p. 108), is open to question. He also reports the Least Sandpiper "pair with young." Mr. William B. Crispin's set of two eggs "collected in Potter County for F. T. Pember by A. Lyon, May 3, 1878"; (*Oologist*, xxiv, 1907, p. 155), are probably the eggs of some variety of the do-